

THE SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

**VR³ Ready...Reliable...Results**

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Rewined expands its market with VR support



"I am passionate about business, putting people in the right positions, and making something people enjoy," says Adam Fetsch, candle maker and founder of Rewined, LLC.

Fetsch's passion led him to start his own business in 2009 in his backyard. Rewined has quickly grown to 30 employees in a downtown Charleston facility with plans to hire more in the upcoming weeks.

"I started selling the candles in Charleston's City Market which gave us the opportunity to be seen by hundreds," says Fetsch. "Without this opportunity we couldn't have grown as fast as we did."

"Vocational Rehabilitation is the other part of the story," he continues. "They helped us cross a turning point. We had to grow and needed reliable people."

With the need for growth putting a strain on his business, a fellow business in the community referred Fetsch to the SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

"Wally was excited and supportive from the moment I called," Fetsch enthuses about Wally West, Charleston Work Training Center Manager.

Understanding Fetsch's needs for his growing workforce, both West and VR Business Development Specialist Cathy Clower started screening candidates. Less than a year later, 15 VR clients are currently employed at Rewined, and more are being screened for future opportunities.

"Cathy has helped us find great

people," recalls Fetsch, "I call and say I need two people and they are here by the same afternoon. We trust Wally and Cathy so much we no longer even interview the referrals."

"To have that flexibility and opportunity at the snap of my fingers is phenomenal," states



Adam Fetsch, Candle Maker and Founder of Rewined.



ingerts is phenomenal," states Fetsch. "Especially when growing a new company."

Rewined candles are currently sold in more than 600 stores



nationwide and shipments to England started two months ago.

"Our goal is finding better ways to serve our customers and to eventually become the leading producer of boutique candles in the world," adds Fetsch.

Beyond the craftsmanship that is put into an extraordinary product, Rewined is truly a great place to work.

"Adam wants a family atmosphere. He wants people to look forward to coming to work here every day," says Megan Theil, Vendor Relations.

Theil points to long family style tables in the break area as she explains, "We have these so that we can all eat together, like a family."

"Rewined values their workers," affirms Clower. "Management encourages personal growth and professional development. Most importantly, employees feel like they are part of a family."



Teresa Sutton, former SCVRD client, pours soy wax into the bottom halves of wine bottles.

Teresa Sutton was the first SCVRD client hired by Rewined and has already been promoted to a supervisory position. As Teresa explains the candle making process with enthusiasm and a sense of pride, she exclaims, "I love it here!"

Rewined, LLC turns discarded items into beautifully designed and functional products. Every step of the candle making process is by hand, using repurposed wine bottles. The bottom half of the bottle serves to hold the all-natural soy wax candle and the top is recycled, leaving zero waste. Products used for packing are also made of recycled materials.

Governor's Committee Winners

The SC Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities works with state and local agencies and mayors' committees to bring greater public awareness to the many talents and qualifications of workers with disabilities and their positive impact on the workforce and our state's economy.

Each year one small, medium and large SC business is recognized for their exemplary practices in hiring and providing leadership in utilizing the abilities that people with disabilities have to offer.

Each of these businesses are partners with SCVRD, proven leaders in their communities and committed to hiring and promoting people with disabilities. And through valuable partnerships with businesses such as these our clients achieve success.



Rewined, LLC of Charleston received the 2013 Small Employer of the Year Award. From left: Teresa Sutton, former VR client; Adam Fetsch, founder of Rewined, Megan Theil, Vendor Relations.

The award recognizes a business that employs 25 or fewer people and is exemplary in its hiring practices and leadership in utilizing the abilities that people with disabilities have to offer.

"I feel awkward accepting this award," says founder Adam Fetsch. "I don't feel like I've really done anything to deserve it. In our eyes, the people we've hired from Voc Rehab aren't disabled people, they are just part of our team. Vocational Rehab has supplied us with outstanding employees and exceptional support services. All we have really done is take advantage of that."

Currently, 52% of Rewined's employees are people with disabilities.





OE Enterprises, Inc. of North Charleston received the 2013 Medium Employer of the Year Award. From left: John King; Shamekia Simmons; James Flowers, Assistant Director of Service Contracts.

The award recognizes a business that employs 26 to 250 people and is exemplary in its hiring practices and leadership in utilizing the abilities that people with disabilities have to offer.

James Flowers said the award aligned with OE Enterprises' mission of "creating opportunities for personal and professional growth for persons with disabilities and other barriers."

OE Enterprises is a private, non-profit corporation which manages the janitorial services at Consolidated Mail Out Pharmacy (CMOP) in Charleston. A valued partner with the Disabilities Board of Charleston County and SCVRD since 2009, OE Enterprises employs 11 individuals with disabilities at CMOP. Management staff consistently provide reasonable accommodations to ensure successful employment. CMOP also provides a positive influence within and outside the workplace, sponsoring quarterly dinners to promote positive morale.



South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles of Columbia received the 2013 Large Employer of the Year Award. From left: Paul Knight, Dept. of Veterans Affairs VR&E Division; Lori Ehlers, VR&E Employment Coordinator; Melinda Woodhurst, Director of Administration; Dottie Blankenship, Human Resource Director; Sherry Wilson, Employment & Recruitment Manager; Kevin Shwedo, Executive Director; Steve Marshall, SCVRD; Darline Graham, SCVRD.

The award recognizes a business that employs more than 250 people and is exemplary in its hiring practices and leadership in utilizing the abilities that people with disabilities have to offer.

In the year since the SC Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV) partnered with the SCVRD's Skilled Workforce Apprenticeship Training program (SWAT), more than 12 VR clients have received valuable training and been hired into customer service positions throughout the state which offer competitive salaries with state benefits. Many other individuals are currently receiving specialized training while serving in apprenticeships and internships.

SCDMV has also opened many doors for veterans with disabilities through their partnership with the Veterans Affairs' Vet Success program. Thirteen individuals have been hired into career positions and 17 others are currently in training.

Four VR High School/High Tech students interned with SCDMV this past

Four VR High School/High Tech students interned with SCDMV this past summer. One student enjoyed the program so much he has continued to work with SCDMV through a non-paid volunteer program.

As a leader in the community, SCDMV also serves on VR's Information Technology Training Center's Business Advisory Council (BAC). The BAC provides instruction on the most recent and in-demand IT fields and has a great history of preparing people with disabilities for technology jobs.



Buckey Woodall of Firehouse Subs in Boiling Springs received the 2013 Employment Achievement Award. From left: Omar Ghorbani, franchise owner; Buckey Woodall, former VR client; Dana Rolin, SCVRD. Back row: Matthew Horton, Manager.

Buckey began working at Firehouse Subs in Boiling Springs in June 2009 as a sign greeter. Even in the blistering June heat, Buckey's unique personality and energy was evident. Cars would honk their horns at Buckey, dressed in his Firehouse Dalmatian Dog costume, as they passed by while he danced with the Firehouse sign.

After only a couple of days of displaying his energy, his punctuality and his desire to please, Buckey was asked to assist in the set up of the restaurant. Buckey excelled in his new tasks, and, due to his enthusiasm, he was invited to Charlotte, NC to compete in a regional contest for "Firehouse Sub sign holders," which he won. Since then, Buckey has trained new sign greeters in other Firehouse locations.

Buckey's other successes, include the Most Outstanding Student Award Scholarship; participating in the Working Wheels Program at Wofford College; competing in two National Special Olympic Games; he is a member of the Hopping Hornets Jump Roping Team; and he was on the 2006 School for the Deaf and Blind Soccer team, which won a Gold Medal. In 2007 Buckey won a

gold medal in doubles bowling and silver in individual bowling.

For more than 50 years the Governor's Committee has sponsored a Journalism Contest that awards a four year scholarship to a state supported college or university, thanks to state legislation that occurred in 1960. Each year the contest produces a winning essay documenting achievements epitomizing the potential of people with disabilities in South Carolina's workforce.

Parker Melton, a senior at Buford High School in Lancaster, is the winner of the 2013 Journalism Contest.

A panel of professional journalists chose Parker's article as the best among all the entries submitted by students from throughout South Carolina, all of which focused on the theme "A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can You Do?"



Parker's winning article told the stories of three people with challenging disabilities whose great determination and support from family and VR staff led to success in the workplace.

Parker was very active in his school, playing varsity soccer and football. He was a member of the school's Relationship of Leaders committee which addresses dating violence among teens. He is actively involved at Covenant Baptist Church, participating in mission trips and youth group activities.

Parker plans to attend the College of Charleston this fall.

Around the state

Tri-Country Tech presents at Anderson office



More than 58 high school students and a dozen school staff gathered at the Anderson VR office on May 9 to learn about training options available to students seeking to acquire specialized skills outside of traditional diploma and degree programs.

Don White of Tri-County Technical College spoke about the Certificate and Quick Jobs programs available through the college's Corporate and Community Education Department.

The attending students were a mix of High School/High Tech and Transition students.

Charleston Job Fair

Eighty-five job ready clients participated in a job fair at the Charleston Work Training Center on May 16. The clients interacted with employers that included Charleston County Parks & Recreation Department, Embassy Suites & Residence Inn Hotel, IES Labor Services, Metal Trades, National Park Service (Fort Sumter National Monument/Charles Pinckney National Historic Site) and Sweetgrass Court Senior Living. Lowe's participated in the event with six HR Managers representing the Charleston area.

All employers left with names and resumes of potential candidates for employment. Employers commented favorably on the organization of the event, client participation, client interaction and helpfulness of the staff.

Orangeburg client wins gold medal

The Orangeburg office is very proud of client Matthew Henderson, who recently won two medals in the Special Olympics.

Henderson won a gold medal for the 15 meter swim and a bronze medal for the 15 meter walk (which involves walking through water).

Henderson is a member of "The Splash Stones" swim team.



Did you know...

...that the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department has been recognized with awards three times by the South Carolina Quality Forum?

The Forum's quality awards recognize organizations, both private and public, that achieve excellent performance in developing, implementing and deploying a quality management system based on the Baldrige Criteria. It is consistent with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award process.

The agency was recognized with a Silver Achiever award in 2001 and Gold Achiever awards in 2004 and 2008.

The agency's quality initiatives are active and ongoing, providing exceptional customer service for people with disabilities in South Carolina and for the business community.

Events

The Bryant Center

The Bryant Center is accepting referrals for its two-week **comprehensive summer program for transition students**. Students attending one of the four scheduled sessions will participate in physical therapy and exercise; learn independent living skills through occupational therapy; enhance leadership, teamwork and communication skills; explore careers and post-secondary interests; and engage in mock interviews and other job preparedness activities.

- June 10-21 - Session 1: **Summer Transition Program**.
- June 24-July 5 - Session 2: **Summer Transition Program**.
- July 15-26 - Session 3: **Summer Transition Program**.
- July 29-August 9 - Session 4: **Summer Transition Program**.

All sessions meet 9 am-12 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday. To refer a student, please fax a SCVR 219, SCVR 318, SCVR 318a (signed by the student and parent) and a Comprehensive Center referral form to Jennie Thomas at 864-949-6775.

For more information, call 864-249-8030 or 888-322-9391

Comprehensive Evaluation Center (CEC)

The CEC **Summer Transition Evaluation Program for Students (STEPS)** is offering three sessions this summer. Referrals are being accepted. Students will participate in physical therapy/exercise, occupational therapy, nutrition counseling, career exploration, and work readiness activities.

- June 17-28 - Session 1: **Summer Transition Program**.
- July 8-19 - Session 2: **Summer Transition Program**.
- July 22-August 9 - Session 3: **Summer Transition Program**.

For more information, contact Gloria Plotnik 803-896-6040

Richland

- June 17-28 - Session 1: **Summer Institute** for transition students.
- July 8-19 - Session 2: **Summer Institute** for transition students.
- August 9 - **Summer Slam**.

For more information, call 803-782-4239 or 866-206-5280

Walterboro

- June 20, 10am-2pm - **Job Fair** at the National Guard Armory.
- June 27, 10am - **Career Fair** at the Walterboro Office for Transition population.

For more information, call 843-538-3116

Columbia

- July 16-18 - The SC **Youth Leadership Forum** (YLF), an annual career leadership program for high school juniors and seniors (or high school students between the ages of 17-21) with disabilities who have leadership aspirations in both their school and community, returns to Newberry College and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Students will enhance and grow their leadership, citizenship and social skills while taking part in activities enabling them to network, learn from each other and build lasting friendships. Get more information at ylf.scvrd.net.
- July 12, 8am-4pm - SC **Brain Injury Alliance Conference** at the Columbia Conference Center, 169 Laurelhurst Avenue, Columbia, SC. Get more information from the [Brain Injury Association of South Carolina](http://BrainInjuryAssociationofSouthCarolina.org).

In recognition of the recent Memorial Day holiday, we pay tribute to all who are serving or have served in our nation's military forces.

Enabling eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment

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